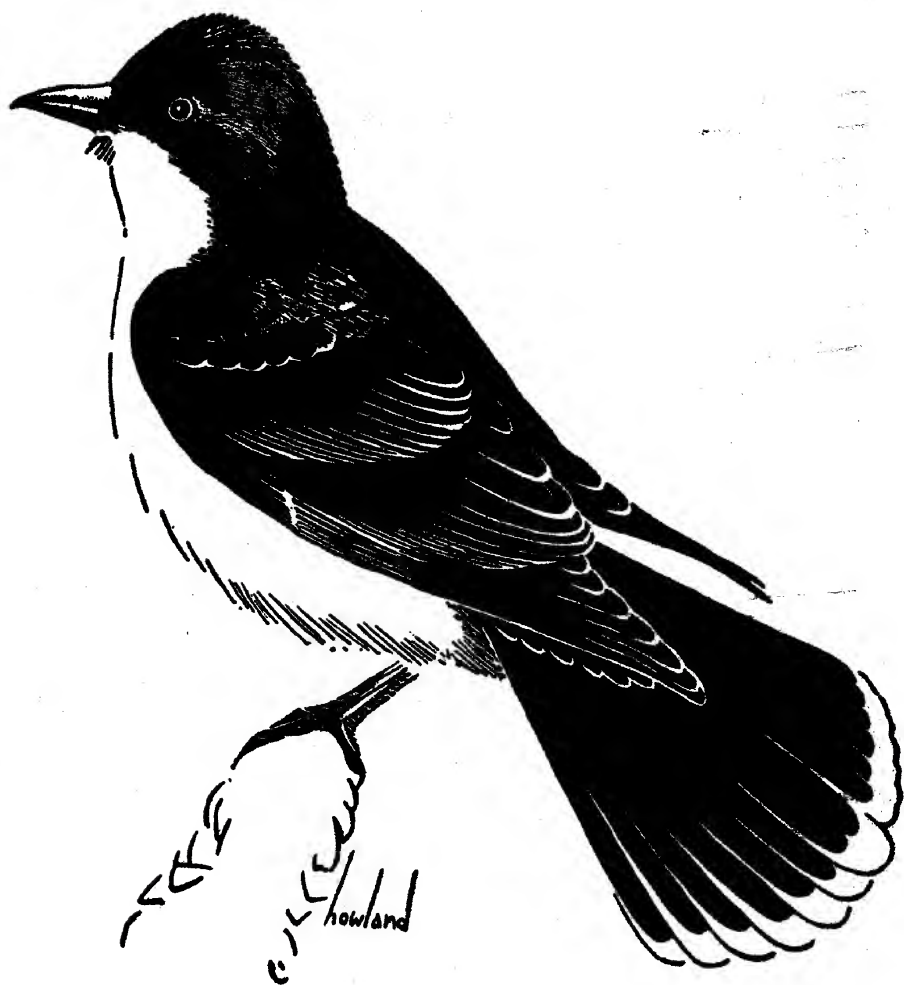


# *The* **KINGBIRD**



VOLUME V, No. 2

JULY • 1955

**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS**



# *The* KINGBIRD

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS

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## NOTICE

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## THE JANUARY WATERFOWL COUNT

GERALD R. RISING

At the Ithaca meeting of the Federation in 1954 I was authorized to set up a sub-committee of the Research and Publications Committee to organize and supervise an annual waterfowl census. This census was taken from January 15 to 23, 1955 and the results are a part of this report. It has been agreed to continue the census in 1956. As this is the first time a census of this type has been taken in New York State an outline of the procedure in setting up the census will be given. This it is hoped will serve groups attempting other similar enterprises as well as future chairmen of this count by giving them a pattern which they can amend to their own taste.

The first and perhaps the most important step in preparing for the count was the selection of a committee. In order to be able to function rapidly, the group was chosen from one area, in this case Rochester. Members of this sub-committee are Howard Miller, Richard O'Hara, John Brown, Don Nelson, and Dirk Benson. From this point the work done in Rochester as well as the decisions made were the group efforts of this committee.

It was necessary to publicize the coming census and this was done by articles released to the *Kingbird* and the *New York State Conservationist*. Contact was then made with the regional editors of the *Kingbird* to enlist their cooperation in organizing their areas, giving the census local publicity, tabulating local reports and forwarding them to the Rochester committee. Each editor agreed to cooperate or locate a person in his region to serve as local chairman. Whatever success was achieved in this count is due in great part to these people. The Rochester committee then drew up forms for use in the census and set up the procedure for census-taking and verification of records.

After the census follow-up letters to regional editors brought in all the reports on time. The State totals were tabulated and supplementary information such as weather data was compiled. A careful comparison with the New York State Conservation Department's aerial count was then made and regional editors were asked to comment on differences. At this time they were also asked to make suggestions and to criticize the procedure and details of the census. These comments are to be carefully considered in organizing the 1956 census.

Finally the information from the 1955 census was filed for use in the comparison with future counts and data from this file served as material for this report.

The results of the census were very satisfactory. A total of 189,324 waterfowl were counted by 231 birders who spent 550 party hours in the field (see Table 1). The Adirondack-Champlain Region was the only region not covered. The thirty-six species included a single Wood Duck, two King Eiders, two Harlequin Ducks, three Whistling Swans, five European Wid-eons, and six Holboell's Grebes. One of the particularly interesting concentrations of ducks was the flock of 11,143 Canvasbacks on the Niagara River. In contrast it is interesting to note the absence of diving ducks in the Susquehanna Region. The small numbers on the rivers in that region evidently arrive there later in the winter.

**TABLE I**  
**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS**  
**First Annual Waterfowl Census — January 15 - 23, 1955**  
**REGIONAL TOTALS\*\***

Region	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VIII	IX	X	Totals
Common Loon	1		1			1			202	205
Red-throated Loon									47	47
Red-necked Grebe	2								4	6
Horned Grebe		3	758		3				810	1574
Pied-billed Grebe	1	4	7	2	3			17	133	167
Mute Swan									313	313
Whistling Swan	1								2	3
Canada Goose			13					2	1521	1536
Brant									2739	2739
Mallard	344	27	261	255	164	17	135	126	3001	4330
Black Duck	317	145	2214	88	610	30	1885	1358	22822	29469
Gadwall									43	43
Pintail	3				21				60	84
Green-winged Teal									17	17
European Widgeon									5	5
Baldpate			5	1					1535	1541
Shoveler									31	31
Wood Duck									1	1
Redhead	48	39	3743		45	13			22	3910
Ring-necked Duck		2	27		4			513	243	789
Canvasback	11143	210	922		11	92		26	6145	18549
Scaup Ducks*	3390	1203	5298		2909	1226		42	55626	69694
Golden-eye	3067	1215	457		504	559	54	415	8426	14697
Bufflehead	42	19	41		17	2		9	1576	1706
Old-squaw	48	119	11		26	10			3154	3368
Harlequin Duck		1							1	2
King Eider									2	2
White-winged Scoter	187	9			1				6585	6782
Surf Scoter	1								1594	1595
American Scoter									226	226
Ruddy Duck	1							5	155	161
Hooded Merganser	4	1	7		2			15	116	145
American Merganser	4951	704	285	194	2470	10	217	677	192	9700
Red-breasted Merganser	72	249	19		555	1			3557	4453
Coot	5	30	1081		4			58	637	1815
Unidentified	336	29	330		28	213		43	8640***	9619*
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>23964</b>	<b>4009</b>	<b>15480</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>7377</b>	<b>2174</b>	<b>2291</b>	<b>3306</b>	<b>130183</b>	<b>189324</b>

\* Long Island (X) includes 118 identified as Lesser Scaup.

\*\* No report from Adirondack-Champlain (VII).

\*\*\* 6180 unspecified scoters included in these totals.

The Marine Region alone counted 130,183 waterfowl — over 68% of the State total. Upstate only the Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Harlequin Duck, American Merganser and Coot were more numerous than off Long Island.

The time of the census was chosen to coincide with the New York State Conservation Department's aerial count in order to make comparisons; to hit a relatively static period in duck activity and to cut down on the number of areas to be covered. These last two considerations led to a more accurate count. It is believed the census gave added incentive to observe birds in the field during a difficult period for such outdoor activity.

Through the cooperation of Dirk Benson of the New York State Conservation Department data from the aerial count was obtained by the committee in exchange for data from the Federation count. The aerial count taken January 11-20, totaled 194,089 waterfowl, a difference of only 2.5% from the Federation count. However, the figures were not as close as this implies. Counts by species and regions show no such agreement. (See

Table II). It appears that ground observers were better able to identify them. The plane, on the other hand, was able to pick out many ducks in areas inaccessible to land observers. They observed two large rafts, totaling almost 39,000 birds, which the Federation counters missed.

Comparison of the counts in the Niagara Region is worth special comment as there the land count is probably the most thorough. Note especially how close the Canvasback counts agree. (See Table II). On the other hand there is disagreement in both the scaup-redhead (grouped because of difficulty of identification from the air) and the merganser counts. A similar situation occurred in Oswego Harbour.

In the St. Lawrence region approximately 24,000 birds were not seen by the ground observers due principally to large rafts of ducks behind the islands. On Long Island, according to John Elliott, a large flock of Brant, observed from land both before and after the census, moved off-shore during the census period and were not seen.

**TABLE II**  
**A COMPARISON**

**NYS Conservation Department Aerial Count\*\* Above,**  
**and Federation Count below.**

Group - Region -----	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VIII	IX	X	Totals
Black Duck -----	510 317	4 145	2807 2214	* 88	337 610	996 30	636 1885	264 1358	26230 22822	31838 29469
Mallard -----	140 344	1 27	1323 261	* 255	70 164	15 17	105 135	35 126	1985 3001	3674 4330
Other Dabblers -----	3 3	- -	50 5	* 1	21 21	- -	20 -	- -	1654 1692	1724 1752
Scaup - Redhead -----	11325 3438	400 1242	7536 9041	* -	1112 2954	10200 1239	- -	110 42	41729 55648	72412 73604
Golden-eye -----	3470 3067	249 1215	1950 457	* -	3657 504	12293 559	- 54	156 415	5997 8426	28129 14697
Canvasback -----	11445 11143	35 210	2228 922	* -	852 11	85 92	- -	290 26	845 6145	15780 18549
Scoters -----	188 188	9 9	- -	* -	1 1	- -	- -	- -	7820 14585	7820 14783
Other Divers -----	91 91	15 141	5 79	* -	43 47	12 12	- -	14 14	688 5131	751 6028
Mergansers -----	1480 5027	66 954	428 311	* 194	1921 3027	2657 11	- 217	200 692	1886 3865	8829 14298
Coot -----	- 5	- 30	525 1081	* -	- 4	- -	- -	58 58	500 637	1025 1815
Geese -----	- -	- -	19 13	* -	- 17	1 -	- -	2 2	22130 6604	22150 6636
TOTALS -----	28360 23964	770 4009	16871 15481	* 540	7949 7377	26247 2174	803 2291	1055 3306	111464 130183	194089 189324

\*\* Region VII (Adirondack-Champlain) aerial count yielded 560 ducks (54 black, 357 golden-eye, and 149 mergansers). These are included in overall totals.

\* Region IV (Susquehanna) is not covered by the aerial count.

A careful combining of aerial and ground counts showed the total population of waterfowl in New York at the time of the census to be about 230,000.

It is significant to note that weather before and during this census was normal in temperature and amount of precipitation.

Rochester, New York.

## AUTHORITIES MAKE TOO MANY MISTAKES

HAROLD H. AXTELL

The most competent field ornithologists can misidentify birds on occasion. In other words, man is not perfect and hence may make mistakes. To reduce these errors to a minimum, statisticians and other compilers of sight records, must demand of everyone a written report of the circumstances concerned with an unusual observation. This is necessary so that future authors can evaluate the sight record on the evidence obtained at the time of observation.

To understand the censor's point of view we must realize that, to him, the examples that follow are not exceptional events — they are commonplace! In fact, these were selected from thousands that I have actually observed or committed.

A frequent source of error is in misjudging size. Several times I have seen perched Starlings mistaken for Crows. Persons who have spent a great deal of time at Hawk Mountain have momentarily mistaken airplanes, butterflies and even gnats for hawks. Usually experienced observers quickly discover their error but on three or four occasions I have known a distant airplane to remain misidentified long enough for more than one person to express a serious opinion on what kind of hawk it was.

One competent authority I know misidentified a Crow because he was unaware of a size illusion even after some twenty or thirty seconds of discussion and looking at the bird. Finally one of his companions had to tell him that the bird perched in the top of an apple tree 150 yards away, which he persisted in calling a Crow, was in reality a Redpoll!

Another frequent source of error is color illusion. Two widely recognized authorities whose records are almost never doubted agreed that two birds were definitely swans, and wrote them down as such on their field record sheet. It then occurred to them to try to determine which kind of swan. They approached closer, and to their astonishment found their "swans" to be Black Ducks. Light conditions can perform apparent miracles in creating illusions of many kinds, especially of color. Many birders have known a "big white bird" to turn out to be a normally colored Crow.

It is generally stated (and to some extent true) that the validity of a record is greatly increased when several observers concur in its identification. The reader will note, however, that all of the following misidentifications cited here involve several or many observers, including in each instance a number of authorities of some repute. In each instance also, there was no likelihood that the observers were not all referring to the same bird.

Fox Sparrows had been reported in early September, some weeks earlier than normal, by the local bird authority in a small community. The following day six birders from elsewhere, three of whom are commonly accorded the status of authorities in their home county, went to verify the report. The three leaders were pointing out several birds 15 to 40 feet away as Fox Sparrows to their three friends, who were concurring, when two more bird watchers came along who succeeded in convincing them that the birds were all Song Sparrows. Apparently no Fox Sparrows were present.

On another occasion at a meeting of bird students from several states, about 8 or 10 observers, most of whom were top experts in their respective parts of the country, finally agreed that a certain shorebird that they had been following and studying for some time was a Baird's Sandpiper. A little later someone who approached it more closely announced that it had yellowish legs. They re-examined it and this time all agreed it was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Misidentification of shore-birds by groups of experts is so commonplace, however, that it should scarcely require specific examples for any experienced birder to be reminded of this fallibility of the experts.

In spite of such occurrences, good observers are not likely to discover how often they may be wrong unless they break up into separate groups, see and identify some of the same birds, then get together and compare notes. This procedure is often so startlingly revealing that it might well be tried by clubs as a scientific exercise to prove the need for greater caution, skepticism, and verification. I will restrict my illustration to a single example. Three automobile-loads of us were on a field trip that was notable for the number of experts in each car. A large hawk flew low and slowly over the road while the occupants of all three cars stopped and examined it. A few minutes later we met and discovered that the occupants of one car had unanimously agreed that the hawk was a Red-tail, those of another car agreed it was a Rough-leg, and the third a Marsh Hawk.

On the Bull's Island field trip at the 1937 American Ornithologists' Union meeting, scores of this continent's leading ornithologists were standing packed on the deck of a boat when a large tern flew close in front of it. Nearly everyone saw it well. Immediately the boat sounded like the bleachers at an athletic contest, some voices calling Royal Tern, and about an equal number calling Caspian, with a number of eminent authorities in both cheering sections. Some were probably uncertain and said nothing, though it did not sound so. Since the tern could not be both species, about half of those who apparently were sure of their identifications had to be wrong. Yet they included many of the very best field experts in the world.

The immediate purpose of this paper is to promote a more widespread recognition of the knowledge that apparently all field students of birds make frequent errors in sight identification of which they often remain unaware. Insofar as this immediate purpose is achieved, two further steps should logically follow: first, a popular recognition of the unreliability of sight records as usually compiled, and second, a desire for greater reliability, with an increased interest in adopting scientific methods of verification.

Birders would then recognize that for an important sight record, there is a lack of adequate authority in any observer's mere reputation or in his avowed feeling of absolute certainty. These fallen authorities — reputation and avowal of certainty — must then be replaced by the superior authority of permanently available evidence, even if it is only written evidence of the mental processes by which a person determined the identity of a bird. Lacking material evidence such as a specimen, photograph, or sound recording, the person interested in making a valid sight record of a rarity will supply evidence by making a complete written record, preferably on the spot, that shows all the observations, reasoning, and other factors on which he based his identification. This account should be filed permanently in some known place where it will always be available to any qualified student for reference.

A mere "authority's record," without such descriptive particulars, is evidence only of an observer's feeling of certainty that he identified a bird correctly. It is not evidence that he actually did identify it correctly. A

permanently available description, however, supplies useful evidence. It can be examined in detail and used as the basis for a reasoned judgment as to the probable correctness of the identification. This written confirmation is both the evidence and the authority for the record. If the observer's techniques of observing and reasoning were adequate, he has an opportunity to prove it in his verifying account of how he identified the bird.

It should be added that although an observer's birding experience, knowledge, ability, and honesty are not, by themselves alone, sufficient to make his unusual sight records acceptable to a properly informed compiler, these achievements are none-the-less of basic importance. Every competent censor-compiler learns to look for signs of these characteristics in every verifying account by "reading between the lines," if necessary. Finding such signs, however, cannot add the least bit to the validity of a logically incomplete write-up; but failing to find them often invalidates a write-up which might give a superficial impression of being adequate.

Adoption of these verifying procedures will not give us sight records in which the correctly identified are always distinguishable, with 100% certainty, from the misidentified. But the improvement in the ability of compilers to judge the probable validity of the records will be enormous. It will be a great benefit to all who are interested in increasing the reliability of sight records. It will introduce some persons to the joys and rewards of using the scientific attitude in everyday living. Most pertinent for our present discussion, it will add immeasurably to the value and prestige of the sight records of those individuals, clubs, and compilers who adopt these verifying procedures, thereby achieving for them a goal long desired by every amateur field observer.

Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo 11, New York.

## BARROW'S GOLDEN-EYE AT AUSABLE POINT, LAKE CHAMPLAIN

THOMAS A. LESPERANCE

Ausable Point, composed of sand and silt, extends into Lake Champlain approximately 200 yards from the main shoreline. Shaped like a bended arm it contains on its inward curve several acres of water unaffected by wind action, regardless of wind direction, and to which large groups of resident as well as migrating waterfowl seek its advantages.

In the early breakups of ice in 1953 a single male Barrow's Golden-eye was observed feeding in this area. By late March when the American Golden-eyes were indulging in pre-nuptial display and courtship antics, this lone Barrow's male was observed trying to interest various female American Golden-eyes in the possibilities of a match. American Golden-eye males vigorously opposed such a situation and the frustration of the Barrow's male was pathetic as well as humorous to watch. This bird was seen for several days and then moved on.

On November 10, 1954 while hunting ducks from a blind at Ausable Point three Barrow's Golden-eyes decoyed to the blind, two were males, one a female. A male and female were collected, prepared into study skins and deposited with the collection of New York State birds at State University Teachers College, Plattsburgh, New York. The data on the birds are as follows: male, length 18", spread 31", weight 2 pounds, 2 ounces; female, L. 18", S. 30", W. 1 pound 7 ounces. American Golden-eyes collected during the same period weighed slightly less.

E. H. Forbush (Birds of Massachusetts and other New England States, Vol. 1, p. 251) mentioned two or more birds shot at Bridport, Vermont on Lake Champlain. K. C. Parkes (*Kingbird* 1951, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 54-56) reviewed the birds occurrence in New York up to that time and stated that the only place in the State where the bird can be expected regularly in winter is at the eastern end of Long Island. He does not mention any Barrow's Golden-eye records from Lake Champlain. F. R. Turrentine (*Kingbird*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 51) reported two male sight records on Saratoga Lake March 13, 1952. F. A. Clinch (*Kingbird*, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 112) reported a specimen shot by Wayne Davis at Alexandria Bay on Lake Ontario in October 1954 which was preserved as a mounted specimen.

I believe that many Barrow's are shot by hunters along Lake Champlain, but as mentioned in a previous article — *Storms and Unusual Visitors in Lake Champlain* (*Kingbird*, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 56) — a lack of interest and knowledge prevents these occurrences from coming to light. Future records may establish some yearly continuity of occurrence for this species in the Lake Champlain area.

Keesville, New York.

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WALTER ELWOOD  
WINSTON WILLIAM BROCKNER

Walter Elwood, dedicated friend of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs from its inception, died in Amsterdam, New York, on April 28, 1955, at the age of 69. Born April 13, 1886, in the Orange County community of Florida, he was the son of Emory Elwood and Catherine Lingenfelter. In his death, New York State conservation and education, has suffered the loss of a great worker.

After receiving his degree in education from Cornell University, in 1908, he went to the Philippine Islands as a Supervisory Teacher for the Bureau of Education.

In 1912, he returned to the United States and became principal of a school in New Market, New Jersey. During World War I, he served in France with the Red Cross. Upon returning to these shores, he was engaged by Oscar Hammerstein II as a playwright and authors' assistant.

Following that, he became a District Superintendent of Schools for the Second Supervisory District in Montgomery County. While in this capacity, he initiated the 4-H Club program in the county.

Walter Elwood's greatest contribution was his organization of a Public School Museum in Amsterdam, in 1939. Many of the exhibits he personally collected while touring in Europe and Asia.

Many who were privileged to attend the organizational meeting of the Federation, will with nostalgia recall the delightful outdoor museum and sanctuary of the Sassafras Bird Club. This too, was a result of the unselfish work of Walter Elwood. In 1931 the sanctuary was established, and almost immediately the Sassafras Bird Club was organized, and he served as its President from 1933 to 1937.

For sixteen years he was President of the Montgomery County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

An important contribution to conservation, was made in 1951, while he was in Albany working for the State Education Department, revising the State Syllabus in Science and Social Studies to include specific references for teaching conservation in the public schools of New York State.

Because of his tremendous interest and drive, he was appointed the first

Chairman of the Conservation Committee of the Federation. He reciprocated, by instituting a system of conservation bulletins that proved invaluable to all the clubs.

In addition to being a member of the American Ornithologists Union, he was also active in Boy Scout and Girl Scout and YMCA programs.

He is survived by his wife, Anne Bevillard Mack, of Chicago. They were married on June 10, 1926, in New York City.

Fitting tribute, as significant of the very high regard and esteem in which his community beheld him, can be gleaned from the fact that the Board of Education of Amsterdam, New York, has changed the name of the school museum to, The Walter Elwood Museum.

Buffalo, N. Y.

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### CLUB NEWS AND NOTES

The Linnaean Society of New York has just published Volume 7 of its Transactions, "The Species of Middle American Birds", by Eugene Eisenmann (formerly President of this Federation). This 128 page work lists all of the species recorded from Mexico to Panama inclusive, giving their technical names, English names, and outlines of range, including a distributional bibliography of more than 200 items. It should become a basic working tool for those interested in the distribution of American birds.

The price is \$2, and the booklet can be obtained from the Secretary, Linnaean Society, *c/o American Museum of Natural History, 79th Street at Central Park West, New York 24, N. Y.*

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### MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING — MAY 28, 1955

Elmira, New York

The Eighth Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs was called to order by President Harold D. Mitchell at 9:15 a. m. Twenty-six delegates representing 18 clubs answered the roll call.

The minutes of the last Annual Meeting were read and approved after addition of the resolution pertaining to the "forever wild" clause (of. Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 71 and 73).

Mr. H. Everest Clements, Treasurer, reported a balance on hand in the checking account, as of May 26, 1955, of \$927.18 and in the permanent fund \$728.31 making a total of \$1,655.49. Seven clubs sold Barton-Cotton, Inc. stationery for the Federation adding to the treasury \$144.80. The President commended Mrs. Dayton Stoner for bringing this source of revenue to our attention.

Mr. Stanley O. Grierson, Conservation Chairman, presented his report as follows: the Conservation Committee is opposed to the proposed dams in Panther Mountain, N. Y., and Dinosaur National Park, Colorado and are preparing pamphlets on this to be mailed to the members and clubs; it was also stressed that habitat preservation should be kept in mind. There was some discussion on the "forever wild" resolution. It was suggested to have a meeting after the papers session to further consider this. The result of this later meeting was that a motion was made by Miss Gertrude Webster who proposed that the members reaffirm the stand on the "forever wild" clause as taken last year. This motion was unanimously carried. The resolution as adopted by the Council in 1954 is as follows:

"Resolved, that the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs favor retention of Article XIV, Section 1, of the New York State Constitution which protects the forest preserve by requiring it to

be forever kept as wild forest land, without modification or amendment, and that the Conservation Committee be authorized to take such action as it deems necessary to achieve this result."

Miss Audrey L. Wrede, Chairman of the Membership Committee, proposed 29 new members. The Council voted to accept these members, bringing the total to 315 members and 26 clubs. Membership application blanks were distributed to the delegates for their clubs. It was also suggested that the increase in membership dues be again brought up for discussion in the member clubs and be acted upon before the end of the calendar year.

In the absence of Samuel R. Madison, Chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, Mrs. Dayton Stoner read the committee's report. The report recommended that incorporation under the Membership Corporation would be more advantageous than under the Education Law as had been proposed. A motion was duly made by Eugene Eisenmann, seconded and carried, that the Council authorize and instruct the committee to prepare a plan to incorporate the Federation under the Membership Corporation Law, and a draft of the necessary changes in the Constitution and By-Laws, and report to the President, with copies to be distributed to the member clubs for full study and consideration, so that delegates can be instructed to act upon it at the next annual meeting.

A suggestion that a change in the name of the Federation might be considered was discussed, and several names were proposed. Opportunity will be given each club to submit name changes to the chairman, Samuel Madison, not later than December 31, 1955.

A report by Fred T. Hall, Chairman of the Publications and Research Committee, was given as follows: Dr. Stephen Eaton, Editor of the *Kingbird*, tendered his resignation effective December 31, 1955. As yet the new editor has not been named.

Gerald Rising reported on the waterfowl census which was the major research project in operation during the year. This was compared with the serial duck survey conducted by the State Conservation Department.

The State Book Committee has lost its chairman, Dr. Gordon M. Meade who has left the state. Robert Arbib, Jr., was named as the new chairman. He reported that there has been brief consideration for chapters for the book. Member clubs are to receive the criteria that is to be published. Already the criteria has been published by the Linnaean Society. The major project for the year is to be a species questionnaire which is in the nature of a test. The member clubs are asked to return the ecological survey which was distributed last year. It was suggested that the committee distribute another copy to each club.

The report of the Bibliography Committee, whose chairman is Dr. Allen H. Benton, stated that the bibliography will follow the general style of the Zoological Record. It was suggested that the coverage of the first publication be 1910-1952 inclusive, thus spanning the gap between Eaton's "Birds of New York" and the 1953-54 lists in the *Kingbird* and that later lists be assembled every 5-10 years. It is hoped that a complete list be assembled on the file cards by 1956. It was decided that local club journals would be listed separately.

It was recommended that subscriptions to the *Kingbird* by individuals and libraries be pushed. Eugene Eisenmann suggested that the *Kingbird* be placed in a subscription agency. Miss Elizabeth Manning was requested to look into this.

The report of the Auditing Committee is to be published in the *Kingbird*. Robert McKinney, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of officers, who were elected for 1956:

President—Dr. Peter P. Kellogg, Ithaca.

Vice President—Albert W. Fudge, Elmira.

Corresponding Secretary—Elizabeth S. Manning, New York.

Recording Secretary—Elizabeth A. Feldhusen, Saratoga Springs.

Treasurer—Allan S. Klonick, Rochester.

A resolution was made and accepted authorizing Dr. Kellogg and Mr. Klonick to take over the Treasurer's accounts in January, 1956.

The Council voted the following to the Nominating Committee for 1956:

Watson G. Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Chairman.

Winston Brockner, Buffalo.

Mrs. William English, Amsterdam.

The following were voted to the Auditing Committee for 1956:

Mrs. Neil Moon, Rochester, Chairman.

Dr. Gerhard Leubner, Rochester.

In the absence of an invitation for the 1956 Annual Meeting, the present and future officers were instructed to select a place for next year's meeting.

A letter was read by Mr. Mitchell that had been written by him to Mrs. Walter Elwood, and her reply, concerning the death of Walter Elwood, April 28, 1955. It was voted to send \$25.00 to the Mohawk Valley Cerebral Palsy Association in memory of Mr. Elwood, who had expressed this wish in preference to flowers.

The members were told of the recent publication by Eugene Eisenmann referred to as Transaction 7, Species of Middle American Birds. This book is on sale and can be obtained from the secretary of the Linnaean Society, Miss Lois J. Hussey, American Museum of Natural History, West 77th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

There was much discussion regarding the Federation joining the Conservation Forum. It was decided that members of the Conservation Committee could join as individual members if they so desired to do so. Miss Mabel H. James explained the early history and purposes of the Conservation Forum.

A vote of thanks was extended to the Chemung Valley Audubon Society for their very kind hospitality.

Respectfully submitted,

ELIZABETH A. FELDHUSEN,  
Recording Secretary.

## YOUR PRESIDENT SAYS . . . .

Thanks are due to the very efficient local committee for a most successful and stimulating annual meeting at Elmira. From the time we arrived at the Mark Twain Hotel for our committee meetings on Friday, until we departed, following our box luncheon at Rorick's Glen on Sunday, our every want was anticipated and satisfied by our hosts.

Saturday's meetings and luncheon at the spacious Harris Hill Glider Base proved a happy choice of locations, as a constant breeze on the hilltop helped greatly to alleviate the otherwise oppressively hot day. Our group photograph, following the luncheon, turned out very well indeed. If you

desire a copy, send your dollar to Albert W. Fudge, 326 Larchmont Rd., Elmira, New York.

Our guest speaker at the banquet, Maurice Broun, of Hawk Mountain, took us on a wonderful year round excursion to his domain, by means of his exquisite colored slides, and his enthusiastic commentaries. I am sure that many of you who heard him and who are, as yet, uninitiated, will wish to associate with the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and spend many happy hours there.

Our President-elect for 1956, Dr. Peter Paul Kellogg, contributed greatly to the success of the meeting by acting as toastmaster at the banquet, by introducing us to the "symphony of the birds", composed entirely from his recordings, and by playing songs of many of our New York State warblers at Harris Hill during the afternoon meeting. These were played out of doors and the songs seemed to come from actual birds in the surrounding woods.

Papers read at the afternoon session by Dr. Leo J. Tanghe, Gerald Rising, Robert S. Arbib, Jr. and Dr. Harold H. Axtell were all very interesting, and I hope that all of them can be published in the *Kingbird*.

An open forum discussion on the "Forever Wild" clause of Article XIV, Section 1, of the State Constitution, relating to the Forest Preserve, was well handled by Eugene Eisenmann, as moderator. Speakers included Dr. Robert Rienow, Professor of Political Science at Albany State Teachers College and Chairman of the Eastern New York Chapter of Nature Conservancy; Dr. Arthur Newkirk, President of the Adirondack Club; P. W. Ham, Vice-President of the Forest Preserve Association of New York State; Dr. Stephen W. Eaton, Biology Department, St. Bonaventure University; H. Everest Clements of our Conservation Committee; and Miss Mabel James, President of the Conservation Forum of New York State. We are indebted to all of these speakers for giving their time to acquaint us with many points regarding the Forest Preserve, with which many of us were not previously familiar.

The breakfast on Sunday morning and the field trips were very enjoyable and the Worm-eating Warbler near Mrs. York's house was most cooperative, showing itself to practically all of the four parties into which the group was divided. Of especial interest was the walk through the breeding bird area and the count of the singing birds found therein. I sincerely hope that participation in this breeding bird census has taken the mystery out of such an undertaking and that similar censuses will result from a great variety of habitats in New York State during the next few years.

We regret to report that one of the Founders of this Federation, and our first President, Dr. Gordon M. Meade, has left New York State to take a position in Washington, D. C. As chairman of the State Book Committee in recent years, he has done an outstanding job in organizing and guiding that important undertaking. We are glad to say that Dr. Meade will be available for advice on any problems that arise and we wish him well in his new venture.

The Chairmanship of the State Book Committee has been assumed by Mr. Robert Arbib, Jr., who has done a large share of the work which has been accomplished so far by the committee. I know you will all cooperate with Bob in answering his requests for information needed by his committee.

HAROLD D. MITCHELL.

# REGIONAL REPORTS

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## HIGHLIGHTS APRIL AND MAY

Most regional reporters agreed that the small land bird migrants were later in arriving and fewer in numbers than in many years. The surge of southern species, so outstanding during the same period last year, did not materialize this year.

American Egrets appeared this spring in regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10. Upstate nesting by this bird should be watched for.

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## REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

CLARK S. BEARDSLEE

The spring migration of the great majority of species reflected the dullness of the weather pattern. Only a single relatively short period of mildness in late April and early May accelerated the movement. Thereafter the weather reverted to seventeen straight days of normal temperatures and sub-normal precipitation. Two or three days were reported to be fairly good, but most were characterized by poor birding. The Buffalo Ornithological Society's spring census on May 22 found the lowest number of migrants ever seen on a comparable date.

**LOONS — DUCKS:** Early records for American Egret were supplied by McMurtry (one near Wellsville April 12 and 13th) and Cummings (2 at Oak Orchard 15th, single birds 13th and 22nd). The last Whistling Swans were seen May 13 at Wellsville (McMurtry) and May 22 at North Cuba Marsh (Eaton). Canada Geese visited the Wolcottsville-Oak Orchard region in their usual large numbers and were last reported there by Brockner on May 29 (24 individuals). Snow and Blue Geese were also noted there regularly at the season peak. A maximum of 5,000 Pintail were counted at Wolcottsville April 1 (Brockner). Scoters did quite well, with 250 White-wings and one Surf at Mayville May 1 (Eldgerkin) and an American May 24 at Lakeside (Brockners). Ruddy Ducks were reported seldom but from widely separated locations.

**HAWKS — OWLS:** No very large number of any of the hawks was seen, although all regular migrants were reported. Of greatest interest was a late Goshawk seen at Scio May 1 by Mitchell and party. Mrs. McMurtry found the first Virginia Rail (April 12) and Sora (April 14) at Wellsville. Western New Yorkers do most of their shore-birding along the extra-territorial north shore of Lake Erie, but a few species are reported, particularly in the spring, from the interior of New York. This year the most interesting phenomenon of the shore bird migration was the splendid showing of Pectoral Sandpipers, of which many good sized flocks (maximum 300 at Wolcottsville April 19) were reported; it is necessary to go back twenty years to find similar numbers here. Spotted Sandpipers were early; Upland Plovers late. Brockner, on a drive from Rochester to Buffalo on April 1, estimated 9,000 Herring and 22,000 Ring-billed Gulls feeding on or near the flooded fields.

**SWIFTS — SHRIKES:** Nighthawks were late; earliest reported May 15, but none thereafter until the 20th. All of the flycatchers were later than average. This was true of some of the swallows also, notably the Tree, which was not reported until April 2; the fact that the Cliff Swallow was not seen until May 8 is probably due more to its rarity around Buffalo than to its actual lateness. Our records of thrushes, with the exception of the Hermit, are free from April dates this year. Gnatcatchers were first reported April 20 (one, Grand Island, Brownstein), and records in May were numerous. Pipits were last reported May 1 (several from Batavia by Buckland).

**VIREOS — WARBLERS:** The poor migration was best exemplified by the lateness and scarcity of these two groups. An exception was the extremely early Blue-headed Vireo seen by Rew and Mitchell at Tifft Street in Buffalo on April 17, but I find no record of the Red-eye until May 14 nor of the Yellow-throated until the same date. Warblers which arrived in April were Black and White (26th), Yellow (23rd), Pine (19th), Black-throated Green and Blackburnian (27th, Cattaraugus Co., Eaton), Louisiana Waterthrush (17th, Cattaraugus Co., Eaton), and Northern Waterthrush (24th). The Tennessee (May 5), Chestnut-sided (May 1 and 4), Ovenbird (May 4), and Canada (May 8) were encouraged by the warm first days of May, but almost all the other species were disgracefully late, and in all the many reports of field trips I can find only one record of Cape May (May 8, Cattaraugus Co., Eaton) until the spring census on May 22, when the migration was practically ended. This is unprecedented in western New York, where the species is usually reported early and often.

**BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS:** A Dickcissel, a rarity in western New York, visited the Klabundes' yard at Lewiston from April 24 to 28. Bobolinks, Baltimore Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were right on time. Indigo Buntings were quite late. Evening Grosbeaks were reported in small numbers from four localities in April, and flocks of thirty were still in Hamburg, Jamestown, Olean and Wellsville during the first three weeks of May. Mrs. Dorothy Baker reported to Mrs. McMurtry that she had observed ten Pine Grosbeaks at Belmont May 6. White-crowned Sparrows were unusually early (May 1, Wellsville, McMurtry), but other sparrows were pretty much normal in their arrival.

132 McKinley Ave., Kenmore, N. Y.

### REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY F. HOYT

April and May were dry with normal or slightly cool temperatures. Vegetation was somewhat ahead of schedule, but birds were mostly late in arrival, there were no waves, and people everywhere complained that birds were scarce, that residents had not returned to their yards this year. The question has been raised as to whether the hurricanes of last fall might have killed many on migration. While opinions of population varied in the case of a few species throughout this Region, there was general agreement that Swallows, Chipping Sparrows, Indigo Buntings, Bluebirds, and most Warblers were scarce. Around Elmira, the water-table was low and waterfowl scarce.

Correction: In report from Region 3 in last issue of *Kingbird*, I should have said: "Great Black Backed Gulls were down in numbers on Seneca" (not Keuka) (Guthrie).

**LOONS — DUCKS:** Common Loons were seen in good numbers on Cayuga in April (Walker). Holboell's Grebe on Chemung River south of Elmira 5/1 was unusual (A. Fudge) and a Horned Grebe found dead at Avoca 4/20 by Atwood was first recorded in some years there. The Pied-billed Grebe was nesting at the new Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary pond near Ithaca in late May (AAA). 13 D. C. Cormorants on Cayuga on 4/16 (Walker) and 20 on 5/15 (Gambrell). Great Blue Herons appeared at Montezuma in large numbers on schedule, were reported as scarce at Avoca this year. An early American Egret was seen at Montezuma on 4/28 (Mumfords), 2 there by the Eaton Bird Club on 5/15, and 2 at Howlands Island on 5/22 (Kellogg et al). Least Bitterns were unreported from several stations around Ithaca. One was seen at Branchport 5/22 (Guthrie), not reported every year there. A Whistling Swan at Montezuma was first reported 4/28 (Mumfords), and was still there the last week in May. Canada Geese came through in good numbers on schedule, 9,000 were at the Refuge on April 1 (L. Smith). 1 Snow Goose also at Montezuma 4/17 (Walker) and one Blue Goose 4/16 (Walker and L. Smith). Hewitt also reported Blue and Snow Geese on Cayuga in late April.

One European Widgeon was at Montezuma on 4/16 (Smith, Walker). There were two Old-Squaws on the Reservoir at Elmira 4/30 (K. Fudge), 12 at the Montezuma Refuge on 4/26 (Walker) and 18 there on 5/15 (Ward). A Ruddy Duck appeared in the Penn Yan basin 4/10 (Lerch, Guthrie) and over a dozen Ruddies were at Montezuma on 5/22.

Two male and one female Hooded Mergansers were new for the Avoca area 3/13 (Atwood). A rather late Red-breasted Merganser was seen on river at Elmira 5/1 (K. Fudge).

**HAWKS — OWLS:** Turkey Vulture feeding on dead cow near Geneva 4/17 (Walker). No Goshawks reported this spring, and all Hawks were reported scarce at Avoca (Carter) and at Geneva (Walker). Three Broadwings over Elmira 5/14 (Welles), observed at Montezuma 5/15 (Eaton Bird Club), none this spring at Keuka or Branchport. The Bald Eagles at Montezuma nested successfully, eaglets were visible in nest from early May on. An Eagle was seen over Elmira airport on 5/8 (Welles). A Duck Hawk was observed eating a Junco at Avoca 4/27 (Atwood), and the lone record of a Pigeon Hawk was at McLean Preserve 5/11 (Thurber).

While Ring-necked Pheasants seemed in good numbers around Ithaca after the winter, Ruffed Grouse were absent from several stations, and were also scarce at Avoca. Florida Gallinules at Montezuma 4/29 (Thurber) and at Dryden Pond 5/11 (Thurber). A Ruddy Turnstone was spotted at Montezuma 5/15 (Gambrell). Wilson's Snipe were reported from expected locations. For the second year in succession, there was a sight record of a Hudsonian Curlew near Ithaca, this year's being at Michigan Hollow 5/1 (Thurber). It could not be located later. The Dryden Upland Plover returned (Dunham) and two were present from 4/23 through late May at Catlin (Andrus). Walker reported Sandpipers as rather scarce this year. 8 Red-backed Sandpipers were at Montezuma 5/21 (Thurber). Dowitchers and 3 Wilson's Phalaropes, the latter quite rare here at any time and especially in spring, were at Montezuma on 5/8 (Munfords). Bonaparte's Gull, several records on river at Elmira 4/13 - 4/26 (K. Fudge), also seen at same time on Cayuga by several observers. 75 Black Terns were over Dryden Lake 5/11 (Thurber). Both Cuckoos seemed to be in average numbers, except at Avoca where they were reported as scarce (Carter).

Barn Owls were reported from several stations: The Murray and Dart farms just north of Ithaca 4/14; a silo on eastern edge of Dryden 5/7 (Kelsey, Dunham); Waterloo 4/10 and Seneca Falls 4/29 (Walker). A Barred Owl was calling at Montezuma at noon 5/21 (Thurber); heard occasionally throughout the spring at Sapsucker Woods (Lane) and was recorded one mile north of Keuka Park 3/30 to 4/10, where it is extremely rare (Mrs. Vireo Whitaker).

Whip-poor-will recorded 4/30 in Guyanoga Valley (Spiker, Lerch) and 5/1 on County-House Road (Lerch). Not found in that area every year. Night-hawks were not seen at Avoca this year, but nested as usual in downtown Ithaca.

**SWIFTS — SHRIKES:** Flickers were migrating in numbers at Elmira 4/4 (Welles). Downy Woodpeckers were down in numbers at Avoca. Fewer reports of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in Region recently. Red-headed Woodpeckers appeared in Stewart Park again this year (Ithaca) and had first nest broken up by Starlings. Several Redheads were seen on Big Island in the Chemung 5/14.

Yellow-bellied Flycatchers are often missed in migration but were reported this year at Elmira 5/14 (Janowski), 5/29 on Big Island in Chemung (Harold Mitchell) and 6/5 at Sapsucker Woods (AAA).

Tree Swallows were late and scarce at Elmira. Cliff Swallows were in unusual numbers on farm of C. Sturdevant, Pleasant Valley near Branchport (Guthrie), with one partial albino in flock.

Tufted Titmice are still increasing in Elmira area. Nuthatches are less common at Avoca than several years ago. Walker reports a good Red-breasted Nuthatch migration in early May, but in other areas they seemed less common than last fall.

A Carolina Wren visited feeders in Cayuga Heights, Ithaca, most of the winter and settled down for the summer in the Fuertes Sanctuary; one appeared in April at the Dabol's in Auburn, two reports from Elmira: one in the city 5/18 (Embler), one near Mrs. York's 5/29 (Axtells). Few reports of Winter Wrens, but one was singing at Sapsucker Woods 4/14 (AAA). The Branchport Mockingbird was last seen 5/15, and one was seen east of Dryden 5/22 (Kellogg).

Robins, which seemed scarce early in the season, picked up in numbers eventually in most areas. Wood Thrushes were scarce around Ithaca, but Veeries were in good numbers. The latter, however, were scarce at Avoca. Thurber reported 4 Olive-backed Thrushes at McLean 5/26, and a late Olive-backed was seen on the Federation field trip, Sullivan's Monument near Elmira 5/29. All observers report Bluebirds scarcer every year. Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers returned to most stations except at Elmira, first nests were broken up at Stewart Park, Ithaca and this species seems to have difficulty each year, except at Watkins Glen.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets scarce at Elmira, in good numbers at Geneva from 4/18 to 5/5 (Walker) and at Michigan Hollow (Thurber).

**VIREOS — WARBLERS:** Yellow-throated and Blue-headed Vireos were reported as absent or scarce around Avoca.

The Worm-eating Warbler was again seen at Mrs. York's at Elmira 5/17. Blue-

winged Warblers are increasing in number each year, a first report for Elmira region coming from the lower Middle Road near Millport (Samson) 5/14, one being seen at Sweeney's Woods 5/15 (near Branchport) (Mrs. Vireo Whitaker) and again 5/22 (Spiker, et al), two new stations near Ithaca: near Slaterville (Kelsey, Dunham) and southern slope of Turkey Hill (AAA). Yellow Warblers were scarce around Ithaca, plentiful at Avoca, and 50 were counted on the Eaton Bird Club census 5/15. More reports than usual of Mourning Warblers this year, from Elmira and Geneva.

Around Ithaca, Chestnut-sides, Redstarts, Nashvilles and Water-Thrushes were down in numbers, but Ovenbirds were plentiful.

**BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS:** Cowbirds, Grackles and Redwings appeared this spring in unusually large numbers everywhere. Redwings have become more and more of an upland bird, and are commoner than Meadowlarks along all country roads.

A Meadowlark which sang constantly the song of a Western Meadowlark and gave the call notes of a Western was first seen by Spiker in the Guyanoga Valley 4/18, and remained there until 5/8. The songs were recorded by members of the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell.

Indigo Buntings were scarce in May around Ithaca and Watkins-Montour areas. Evening Grosbeaks came through in large numbers in early May, and were reported then from some sections which had not had them in the winter. Individuals remained until the last week in May. Purple Finches were scarce at Ithaca, common at Avoca. Pine Siskins were scarce everywhere, but fed with Goldfinches on the Keuka campus the first week in May. Goldfinches were common at Avoca, scarce at Dryden (DeNeef). White-winged Crossbills were seen by Kelsey at Dryden Cemetery 5/5, unreported elsewhere.

Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows are down in numbers. Tree Sparrows were gone from Avoca 4/19. Last one at Etna 5/1 (Hoyt). Chipping Sparrows are scarce at Ithaca. Field Sparrows up and Swamp Sparrows down at Avoca (Carter). White-throated Sparrows were late in coming this year, and were in small numbers. Peak at Ithaca was on 5/2. White-crowns were also few in numbers.

Fox Sparrows were absent around Keuka (Guthrie), and a late one was seen at Mt. Zoar by Mann, on 5/14. A Snow Bunting on 4/21 south of Branchport, seen by Spiker, was latest date ever recorded there.

"Avianna," Etna, N. Y.

## REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

April was a relatively cool month in the Susquehanna Region and the few warm, pleasant days came as singles so that the first proper warm spell started in the first week of May. The first three weeks of May were pleasant, with little rain. The lack of rain almost reached the serious stage, but the last week of May was decidedly cool and wet.

**LOONS — DUCKS:** Common Loons were seen at Deposit from 4/14 to 5/1, but numbers were down from last year (Wilson). One was seen at Norwich from 4/26 to 5/8 (R. White). The first Horned Grebes were 6 at Deposit (Wilson), 6 at Windsor (Sheffields), and 20 near Binghamton (Bemont), all on 4/10. 4/23 saw the last one at Deposit.

A Double-crested Cormorant was reported from Deposit 4/19 and 3 on 4/20 (Wilson). Eaton's Birds of New York does not list this species for either Broome or Delaware County. The area has been under observation for the last 10 years without producing any other records.

4 American Egrets were seen at Boland's Marsh near Binghamton 4/20 (Bemont). One was at Norwich 5/14 (S. & R. White) and another was seen near Endicott at about the same time (Loomis). These are the first spring records for the species in this area in recent years. A mature Little Blue Heron was seen at close range while feeding at Deer Lake near Pharsalia in Chenango County 5/30 (H. P. Nodecker). This is only the second record of the adult of this species in this area. The first was seen 4/8/54 in Tioga County and reported in the "Kingbird" at that time. The first Green Herons were two at Deposit 5/4 (Wilson). Late! The first American Bittern was at Deposit 4/10 (Wilson).

A Whistling Swan was noted in Binghamton 5/25 (Paul). It may have been an immature bird but is never-the-less very late. The last Canada Geese were seen 5/15, 7 near Binghamton (Triple Cities Naturalists Club) and 10 at Sherburne (S.

White). The largest flocks were 250+ on 4/10 and 200+ on 4/30, both at Oxford (Stratton). There were numerous medium sized flocks noted.

The last Pintails were at Whitney Point Dam 4/3 (TCNC). Green-winged Teal were present around Binghamton until 4/25 (TCNC). Blue-winged Teal arrived at Binghamton 4/13 (Bemont) and were last seen 5/7 (TCNC). Norwich was the only area to report Redheads and the one seen there was gone after 4/3 S. White). Ring-necked Ducks were last seen at Binghamton and Norwich 4/3. Greater Scaup were last seen at Binghamton 4/3 except for a single male which spent 4/17 to 4/20 on Boland's Marsh all by itself (TCNC). The last Lesser Scaup were 18 at Deposit 4/21 (Wilson). The only Old Squaw were 2 on 4/20 and 14 on 4/21 at Deposit (Wilson) and 4 on 4/21 at Norwich (R. White) with the exception of a lone female at Deposit 5/7 which may have been injured. 4 White-winged Scooters were seen at Deposit 4/29 (Wilson). 2 Ruddy Ducks were at Guilford in Chenango County 4/17 (S. White).

Except for the Deposit area the last Hooded Merganser was at Buckhorn Lake near Unadilla 4/10 (Wisner). At Deposit a nest was under observation all during May until by 5/30 all but one egg had hatched (Wilson). Except for a few birds which remained along the Beaver Kill all through April and May (Wilson), the last American Merganser was one at St. John's Pond near Binghamton 4/16 (Bemont). A Red-breasted Merganser was seen at Norwich 4/3 (S. White). At Deposit the first one was noted 4/9 and the highest daily count was 3 on 4/21.

**HAWKS — OWLS:** A Turkey Vulture was seen at Bainbridge 4/10 (E. J. Smith) and another was at Windsor the same day (Sheffields). In addition 3 were seen at Deposit 4/23 and 1 or 2 have been present there throughout May (Wilson). One was seen at Vestal 5/22 (TCNC).

Broad-winged Hawks were last seen 5/15 at Deposit (Wilson) and at Binghamton (TCNC) with never more than 2 or 3 being seen in a day. The first Osprey was at Binghamton 4/12 (Bemont) and the last one was at Deposit 5/11 (Wilson).

Three Wild Turkeys were seen near Windsor, Broome Co., 4/10. One of them had a green band on the right leg (Sheffields).

The first Florida Gallinule was at Boland's Marsh 4/22 (Bemont) and the last Coot was at Deposit 5/15 (Wilson). Both species seem to be below normal in numbers.

The last Wilson's Snipe was at Boland's Marsh 5/7 (Sheffields, Whites). An early Spotted Sandpiper was near East Windsor 4/17 (TCNC). The first Solitary Sandpiper was at Deposit 5/5 (Wilson). Greater Yellowlegs were first seen 4/18 at Boland's Marsh and last seen 5/15 in the same place (TCNC). They were also seen at Deposit 5/6 (Wilson) and 4/26 at Marathon and 5/7 & 5/8 at Chenango (Thurber). Lesser Yellowlegs were first seen 5/11 at Boland's Marsh (Sheffields), 5/16 at Buckhorn Lake (Wisner) and 5/18 at Deposit (Wilson).

A Bonaparte's Gull was at Boland's Marsh 4/19 (TCNC). There were 2 at Deposit 4/21 and 2 more 5/1 (Wilson). Black Terns were considerably more common than usual this year around Binghamton (TCNC).

The first Yellow-billed Cuckoo was seen 5/11 and the first Black-billed 5/7, both near Binghamton (TCNC). Both seem quite common this year.

A Barred Owl was heard at Deposit 4/16 (Wilson).

**GOATSUCKERS — SHRIKES:** A Whip-poor-will was reported calling in Cortland 5/8 (Thurber). A few miles south of Vestal there was one calling as late as 5/29 (Snow). The first Nighthawks were at Binghamton 5/13 (Hannans) and the first Chimney Swifts were at Buckhorn Lake 4/30 (Wisner). The first Ruby-throated Hummingbird was Oxford 5/9 (Stratton).

There were only two reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers this spring. One at Ely Park in Binghamton 5/8 (Layman) and one at Bainbridge 5/9 (E. J. Smith). The first Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was near Windsor 4/17 (TCNC) and the last one at Chenango Valley 5/22 (Thurber).

Alder Flycatchers were first noted in both Binghamton and Deposit 5/22 and Least Flycatchers at Deposit 5/3. The first Wood Pewees were at Binghamton 5/15. The only Olive-sided Flycatcher reported was at Deposit 5/21 (Wilson).

Swallow arrival dates: Bank 4/25 at Binghamton, Rough-winged 4/15 at Deposit, Barn 4/10 at Binghamton, Cliff 4/25 at Binghamton and Purple Martin 4/20 at Binghamton. Cliff Swallows seem down in numbers.

No House Wrens were reported until 4/28, about 2 weeks later than either of the last two years. The last Winter Wren was at Deposit 5/1 (Wilson). Long-billed Marsh Wrens appeared at Boland's Marsh 4/17 (TCNC).

A Mockingbird spent several hours around Mr. Wilson's lawn in Deposit 5/13. This is the first one he had ever observed there. Catbirds were first seen in

Deposit 5/4 and seem to be especially common there this year (Wilson). Brown Thrashers seemed more common around Binghamton.

Wood Thrush, 5/3 (Easton) and Hermit Thrush, 4/18 (Carpenter) both near Binghamton were just about on time. The Olive-backed Thrush, however, was a week later than the last three years. It didn't appear until 5/23 in Binghamton (Marsi). Bluebirds seem scarce in Deposit this spring (Wilson), but in Binghamton numbers are nearly normal.

Blue-grey Gnatcatchers did not appear in Binghamton for the first time in four years. Golden-crowned Kinglets have been scarce all spring around Binghamton. The last reported were 4 at Cortland 5/7 (Thurber). Ruby-crowned Kinglets have been normal in numbers. The last ones were at Deposit 5/11 (Wilson).

**VIREOS — WARBLERS:** Yellow-throated Vireos were first seen at Deposit 5/3 (Wilson). The first Blue-headed Vireos were at Binghamton 4/20 (Carpenter) and the last were reported from Cheningo 5/28 (Thurber). Blue-eyed Vireos arrived at Binghamton 5/8 (TCNC) and Warbling Vireos at Unadilla 5/4 (Wisner).

A Prothonotary Warbler was at Willow Point 5/8, across the river from Johnson City (Layman). The first Broome County record in recent years.

The first Golden-winged Warbler was at Cheningo 5/8 (Thurber). Around Binghamton this one of the few species to show an increase in numbers over last year. This year 2 Brewster's Warblers were found in widely separated spots on the spring census, 5/15, in the Binghamton area (TCNC). This brings the three year total to five. A Blue-winged Warbler was also found on the census (H. Marsi), but this is only the second record in recent years. The number of Brewster's is not quite so surprising when it is noted that Eaton lists the Blue-winged as fairly common in Broome County but doesn't list the Golden-winged at all back in 1908 and the situation is now almost completely reversed.

The first Tennessee Warbler was at Deposit 5/6 (Wilson) and the first Nashville at Norwich 5/1 (S. White). Both were in normal numbers, but Parulas, which were first seen at Deposit 5/7, were very scarce. Yellow Warblers appeared at Binghamton, Cortland, Deposit and Oxford all on 5/2. Magnolia Warblers appeared first at Deposit 5/4 (Wilson), but only around Cortland were they at all common. Cape May Warblers were at Cortland 5/7 and last seen at Binghamton 5/15 (TCNC). Black-throated Blues appeared 5/8, late, and have been quite scarce. One was reported 3/14 in Oneonta (Will), but it would be better to have such an early record backed up with a specimen before it is allowed to stand. Migrant Myrtle Warblers were seen in normal numbers in Deposit (Wilson), but in Binghamton they were late and noticeably down in numbers although by no means scarce (TCNC). Black-throated Greens were scarce but no more so than last year. One singing male Cerulean Warbler was seen 5/15 at Chenango Bridge near Binghamton (Bemont, Layman). Blackburnians were the only Dendroicae other than Yellow and Chestnut-sided Warblers to be found in normal numbers in the Binghamton area. The only Bay-breasted Warbler report was of several at Cortland 5/7 (Thurber). Blackpoll Warblers — 5/20 at Cortland and Binghamton to 5/29 at Deposit. No Pine Warblers were reported all spring. Only one Palm Warbler report — 5/13 at Binghamton (Sheffields). One Yellow Palm Warbler at Norwich 4/13 (R. White) and another at Buckhorn Lake 4/17 (Wisner).

Ovenbirds arrived at Deposit 5/5 and Northern Waterthrushes at Binghamton, Cortland and Deposit 5/8. Louisiana Waterthrushes were found near Windsor 4/23 (Sheffields). Mourning Warbler 5/22 at Labrador and 5/28 at Cheningo (Thurber) and 5/30 at Norwich (S. White). Chats continue to increase around Binghamton. Canada Warblers were reported to be common around Cheningo and Labrador (Thurber), but uncommon elsewhere.

**BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS:** The first Bobolinks of the season were reported from Laurens, north of Oneonta, 5/1 (Roffe). The first Baltimore Orioles were at Unadilla and Deposit 5/3. Rusty Blackbirds were last seen at Deposit, 4/17.

A pair of Cardinals is reported to be trying to nest in Oneonta (Will), and one has been heard singing at Cook Falls in Delaware County (Wilson). They are not common in that area.

The first Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Endicott 5/4 (Carter) and the first Indigo Bunting at Willow Point 5/11 (TCNC). Last dates for Evening Grosbeaks were 4/25 at Deposit, 5/14 at South New Berlin, 5/15 at Binghamton and 5/16 at Unadilla. The first Purple Finch report for the whole region for 1955 was of 4 at Binghamton on 4/10 (Shanley) and have never become very common. The only Pine Siskins reported this year were 3 at Deposit 4/23 (Wilson).

White-crowned Sparrows have been absent from Deposit and Cortland and uncommon in Binghamton, but at Bainbridge they appeared 5/5, were more

common than usual and stayed longer (Smith). Fox Sparrows remained at Deposit until 4/16, but none were found in the Cortland area in spite of intensive searching (Thurber).

R. D. No. 3, Binghamton, N. Y.

## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

Fritz Scheider

April was warm and rainy, the rain being especially marked (or noted) on weekends. This earlier wet condition plus prolonged, sunny weather in the last week of April and throughout May, hastened the seasonal growth of plants in Syracuse by as much as 2 weeks, according to some local botanists. Oaks, normally not in full leaf until June 5, were completely leafed out by May 22. The even warm weather which prevailed from May 5 until the end of May precluded any migration "stalling" and landbird waves subsequent thereto (one exception — a fair wave on 5/5, Syracuse).

Largely because of the poor weather on weekends, the waterfowl counts of the first 3 weeks in April were extremely low. The bright spot in a rather disappointing April was the location of a fine Hawk Lookout near the S. E. "corner" of Lake Ontario. In 6 days of observation, 2,000 hawks of 16 species were observed flying by this point. As to passerines, "Too soon leaves, too few warblers" sums up for most migrants. The May movement, one of the poorest, both in quality and quantity, on record. Noteworthy features were (1) the almost complete absence of certain species, such as Pipits, Blue-headed Vireo, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, normally found in much greater numbers, (2) the general tardiness both in first arrival and peak dates, and (3) the lack of any records of certain minor migrants like the Olive-sided Flycatchers and Lincoln's Sparrow.

**LOONS — DUCKS:** Common Loon — good flight (fairly common to common) in last 3 weeks of April; most observed flying high and N. W. over Lake Ontario. Horned Grebe — flight widespread but low in numbers (high count, 20, 4/14, Lake Ontario). Great Blue Heron — not reported until 4/2, Oneida; about 10 days late. American Egret — 3 (with nuptial plumes) on 4/17, Three Rivers GMA is our earliest record; 2 later April records of single birds. Green Heron — several "first arrival" reports on 4/23 seem to indicate a side movement into the area. Whistling Swan — 1 record only, 1, 4/2-5, near Oswego (M. Rusk). Canada Geese — the numbers of this species in early April were extremely disappointing, being reduced to 1/2 of last year's at the best area (Mud Lake) and even more so in other areas (e.g., Oneida Lake); however, a major movement of Canada Geese occurred across the region in the last week of April and the first week of May with V's up to 350 in number reported. Brant — first record of 2, 5/23, Oswego (M. R.) built up to 29 shortly thereafter; no other reports. The duck flight paralleled the low goose numbers with only Black and Ring-necked reaching counts above common. Green-winged Teal — last date, 20, 5/15, Clay Swamp is late. Shoveler — 2 pr., 4/10, 3 Rivers GMA is the only regional record. Particularly low in number were Pintail, Baldpate, Scaup, and Redhead. Old Squaw — 2, 5/2, Oneida Lake is late for this mid-winter duck. The usual May stragglers of Scaup, Golden-eye, and Merganser were not observed this year on Lakes Oneida and Ontario. Ruddy Duck — only record is 3 ♀, 4/10, Oneida Lake.

**HAWKS — OWLS:** Turkey Vulture — reports of 1 regularly near Westernville (Mrs. F. W. May), a record of 3 near Central Square (5/18), and 1, 4/14, Sandy Pond, point to the continuing spread of this species here. Goshawk — 1 imm., 4/17; 1 adult, 4/30 at Hawk Lookout along Lake Ontario; 1 adult regularly present at Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse, until the late date of 5/20. Sharp-shinned Hawk — these, with the Broad-wings, constituted the bulk of the 2,000 birds passing the Lookout; many came within 10-12 ft. of the observers and responded to "whispering" or squeaking. Cooper's Hawk — 3 nests located near Syracuse, a marked change from last year's complete lack of nesting records of this species. Red-tailed — 17 young out of 11 nests banded by Dr. B. P. Burt near Syracuse. Broad-winged — best flight **observed** was 650 birds on 5/1. Rough-legged Hawk — 1 light phase

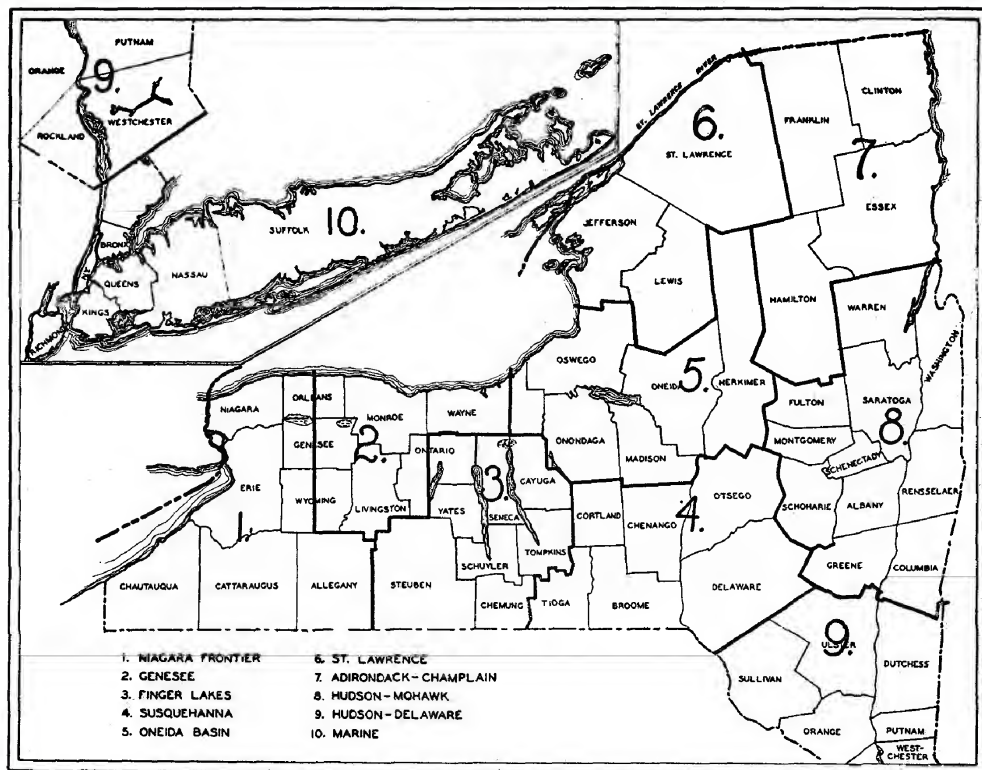
bird, 4/17, Lookout, is the last spring record. Harrier — high of 31, 4/17, Hawk Look-out; seems to be disappearing as a breeder from the open country S. of Oneida Lake and around Baldwinsville. Osprey — 1, 4/9 near Hamilton is first date. Peregrine Falcon — 1, 4/14; 1, 5/1 at the Look-out; no other reports. Merlin — 3 on 1 day (4/17) at the Hawk Look-out upsets previous conceptions of this bird's migration status with us. Both Virginia Rail and Sora were reported about a week late. Coot — 1, 5/5, Clay Swamp, could be a summering cripple or a possible breeder. Upland Plover — 1, 4/14, Hawk Look-out, is the first arrival date; a nest with 4 eggs located (5/16) near Rome (Mrs. H. Aspinwall). Spotted Sandpiper — 1, 4/16, Oswego is early. Pectoral Sandpiper — only report is 12, 4/10-12, near Oneida (A. and P. Jones). Least Sandpiper — 1, 5/5, Clay Swamp, is our earliest record. Bonaparte's Gull — unrecorded this spring, though it is usually present in numbers on Lake Oneida. Common Tern — very late; first records are a flock of 30, 5/5, near Oswego, about 2 weeks late. Caspian Tern — 2, 4/18, Sandy Pond, (J. Belknap) is arrival date. Cuckoos — the Yellow-billed appears to be much more common than the Black-billed with a ratio of 2:1 to 8:1 depending on the area in the Region. There seems to be no correlation between concentration of cuckoos and tent caterpillars. Horned Owl — 8 young from 4 nests banded this spring by B.P.B. Snowy Owl — 1, 4/17, S. of Mexico is noteworthy, but does not equal previous late date.

**SWIFTS — SHRIKES:** Chimney Swifts — 3, 4/24, Lake Ontario is early; however, numbers did not arrive at Syracuse until 5/4. Red-headed Woodpecker — first date, 2, 5/5, Oswego; 1 pr. still breeding near Syracuse despite the presence of a large factory 300 yards away; the 3 breeding stations at Oneida again active. Sapsucker — 25, 4/24, Green Lakes State Park is a peak count; last date is 1, 5/31, Fayetteville. Kingbird — 1, 4/24, Lake Ontario is a record arrival date. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher — 1, 5/15, Selkirk is early. Crested and Alder Flycatchers and Wood Peewee were late by anywhere from 2-5 days; Alder Flyc. appears to be more generally distributed this spring than last. Barn Swallow — first report on 4/10, Bank — 4/14, Rough-winged — 4/15, Cliff — 4/16; on 5/22 near Munnsville, H. P. Nodecker located a colony of 25 pairs of Cliff Swallows, our largest colony to date. Blue Jay — migrants (flock of 19) observed as late as 5/15 migrating E. along Lake Ontario. Red-breasted Nuthatch — migrant birds not reported until 5/3 with 10, 5/10, Syracuse; 10, 5/11, Oswego as peak dates. House Wren — first bird on 4/17, Selkirk, but main body did not come into Syracuse until 2nd week of May (late). Carolina Wren — single pairs regularly present at Clark's Reservation and S. Onondaga and 1 bird resident at Camillus Valley through April and May; a report of 1, 4/24, Selkirk (Mrs. E. Evans) may represent a stray or an attempt at northward extension. Short-billed Marsh Wren — despite careful search of all known colonies and likely habitat in adjacent areas, no birds have been located; this species has virtually disappeared from the area in the past 6 years. Catbird — 1, 4/28, Syracuse, is a few days early. Hermit Thrush — flight was late (first bird on 4/16) and poor (high count, 8, 4/20, Syracuse). Olive-backed Thrush — high count at Syracuse was 6, 5/20; 25-50 is a more normal number. Gray-Cheeked Thrush — 1, 5/31, Syracuse is the only spring report and even this is late. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher — 3 on 5/8, Camillus Valley, proved herald to one of the best spring finds, a nest of this species there, high in an elm on 5/15; bird apparently incubating on 5/22. Golden-crowned Kinglet — this species and the Pipits fall into the same pattern; virtually absent from the area, many observers reporting none of either species, and the so-called "high" counts were quite low. Ruby-crowned Kinglet — only a fair flight, never above the status of common. Northern Shrike — last date 1 singing bird, 4/5, Syracuse. Loggerhead Shrike — 2 April (1, 2) and 1 May (1) records, from northern Onondaga County and the Sandy Pond area.

**VIREOS — WARBLERS:** Blue-headed Vireo — not reported until 5/4, about 2 weeks late. Warbling and Yellow-throated Vireos — the greater number reported (e.g., 22 Warbling and 15 Yellow-thr. reported by 1 party on the Spring Census) may indicate an actual increase or results of increased range of coverage. Philadelphia Vireo — 3 reports with 2/day as best count.

Probably the greatest disappointment of the spring was the poor warbler flight with most species anywhere from 2-10 days late. Prothonotary — first date, 5/14; total of 4 reported from the Short Point Bay area, Oneida Lake, 5/18. Blue-winged — 1 singing male observed at Camillus Village, 5/8; seen there, 5/22, actively pursued by a male Golden-winged, probably over a female Golden-wing, that seemed to follow the pair of males closely. Tennessee and Nashville — excellent flight of both this spring, the former early (12, 5/5, Oneida), the latter not re-

## REPORTING REGIONS



For descriptions of Regions see Kingbird Vol. IV, Nos. 1 and 2

ported until 5/1 (about 4 days late); high count of Tennessee was 75, 5/20; of Nashvilles, 15, 5/10-12. Parula — missed by most observers, never more than 2/day. Magnolia — first arrival, 1, 5/7, Camillus, but did not peak until 5/20-22. Yellow — not reported until 5/1, a week late. Cape May — on time (5/2) but counts even lower than last year (peak of 6 where 35-40 is a more normal peak figure). Myrtle — as judged by the compiled reports, never reached the status of abundant at any time in the region. Black-thr. Blue, Black-thr. Green, Blackburnian, Black-poll — all fit the same general pattern; late and reduced anywhere from 1/3 to 1/10 last year's counts from the same area. Cerulean — several new breeding sites reported; probably always present (?), but unchecked until this spring. Bay-br'sted — a count of 15, 5/20, Syracuse, was a welcome change from the low numbers of other species. Palm — 1 Yellow Palm reported 4/17, Van Buren (C. Farnham); also 1 or 2 Western Palm from Selkirk and Syracuse, but no one reported even a small wave of this species. A Water-Thrush (Sp.?) was heard and seen on the remarkably early date of 4/3, South Onondaga (Mr. and Mrs. R. Burdick). Mourning — 1 singing male, 5/15, 3 Rivers GMA, is early. Yellow-throat — first report, 3, 5/1, Selkirk, is a few days late. Wilson's — 1, 5/18, Selkirk, small wave (7) at same place, 5/24 (E. E.).

**BLACKBIRDS — FRINGILLIDS:** Redwing, Grackle, Cowbird — flocks (up to 400) of these species were still migrating east along Lake Ontario as late as 5/1. Bobolink — a marked increase around Cazenovia, compared to last year's counts (Mrs. O. M. Edwards). Scarlet Tanager — first reported on 5/1, but Rose-breasted Grosbeak had not returned until 5/5. Cardinal — now appearing regularly at Oneida; this, like the Turkey Vulture, appears to be advancing into the Rome-Oneida area. Evening Grosbeak — present through April and up to 5/7 in ever

diminishing numbers at Westernville (Mrs. F.W.M.); however, at Syracuse, Oswego, and Oneida, birds began to appear 5/4, 4, and 6 respectively, built up to a peak (25) about the 15th, and then quickly passed on with the last dates 5/22, Syracuse, and 5/27, Oneida. Purple Finch — scattered reports in last 2 weeks of April, but peak numbers did not come until 5/12 (about 10 days late). Redpoll — 2, 4/15, Selkirk is record last date. Pine Siskin — although there were no April records, this, like the Evening Grosbeak, had a fine May flight, beginning 5/1, peaked (25) 5/8, with last date, 1, 5/22, Oneida. White-winged Crossbill — 2, 4/25 and 1, 4/26, Oneida (H.P.N.) are the only records. Towhee — 1 ♂, 3/30, Syracuse is very early. Savannah and Vesper Sparrows — 4/10 (Oneida) is arrival date for both, but birds not widespread until at least 1 week later. Henslow's Sparrow — 1 on 4/23, and Grasshopper Sparrow — 1 on 5/3, (W. R. Spofford) probably represents the normal arrival dates rather than the concentrated flurry of records in mid-May attendant on the increased birding of that season. Tree Sparrow and Junco — the poor flights of March were only prelude to the low flock counts of these species in early April; Tree Sparrow's last date is 4/13, a few days earlier than expected. White-crowned Sparrow — like the Pipits, almost completely absent; it was not recorded at Oneida throughout May and only 1 (usually 25-40) was seen at Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse; high count was the ridiculous low of 3. White-throat — a poor, late flight with peak numbers this year only 1/3 of comparable '54 counts.

151 7th North Street, Syracuse 8, N. Y.

## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

FRANK A. CLINCH

Few reports for April and May were received and all were brief. Many birds arrived early this spring. All who mention the Bluebirds say that fewer have been seen and that they have heard others give similar observations.

**LOONS — DUCKS:** Double-crested Cormorants appear to be more numerous than last year and they have started nesting. Several Brant were seen in Lake Ontario about May 20. A pair at Bass Island Refuge remained all day and acted like a breeding pair (Clements), (June 6). A White-winged Scoter was found dead in Lake Ontario by a game protector.

**HAWKS — OWLS:** Several Rough-legged Hawks were seen in April by Belknap, J. Blake has observed a decrease in the numbers of Marsh Hawks, Ruffed Grouse and Common Terns. There is an increase in the number of Ring-billed Gull nests. The last Snowy Owl seen by Belknap was April 14. A few Red-headed Woodpeckers — about the normal number — have been seen.

**THRUSHES:** Several reports from various parts of Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties all agree that there is a marked reduction in the number of Bluebirds this year. J. Blake has seen many Brown Thrashers. A white Robin is living in Watertown and has attracted the attention of many people. Only the under parts are normal color.

**WARBLERS — SPARROWS:** A Connecticut Warbler has been reported as well as many of the more common Warblers. The last Evening Grosbeaks were seen in Watertown May 18 (F.C.) and the last in Potsdam May 31 (L. Blake). One Lapland Longspur reported near Perch River April 4.

173 Haley St., Watertown, N. Y.

## REGION 8 — HUDSON - MOHAWK

JAMES K. MERITT

The months of April and May were both warmer and drier than normal in the Schenectady area. The average May temperature was 62.3 degrees, a whopping 4.2 degrees above normal. While May rainfall was only slightly below average, virtually all of it came during the last ten days of the month. The hot and dry weather which prevailed virtually without exception during the peak of the migration period accounted for a noticeable lack of any general flight, especially among the warblers. An exception to this general

statement was the White-crowned Sparrow migration, which, although brief, was very marked.

April was a very interesting month since there were an above-average number of reports of species normally associated only with winter weather. A freak find that month was an American Magpie, the first local record (not unexpectedly). May reports included no rarities, except possibly the Mockingbird, and few concentrations of the more common arrivals.

Many observers commented on the heavy tent caterpillar infestation which was particularly conspicuous in very late April and the first two weeks of May.

The annual Century Run conducted by the Schenectady Bird Club on May 14 revealed 126 species. Nine parties participated.

**LOONS — DUCKS:** A dozen or so Common Loons and several Horned Grebes were in evidence at Saratoga Lake on April 17 (Schenectady Bird Club). A Horned Grebe was observed at Washington Park, Albany, the first week in May (Lillian Stoner). The American Bittern was first seen locally at Vischer's Ponds on April 2 (James Meritt). An American Egret was recorded on the May 14 Century Run. On April 2 some 65 Snow Geese were along the Mohawk at Niskayuna, near Schenectady, and on the following day 38 were at Niskayuna and a group of about 30 was at Saratoga Lake (SBC). The latter were apparently a breakaway group from the April 2 flock. The Snow Goose had not previously been recorded locally in such numbers. The species was last reported on April 5, when only a few were seen (Esly Hallenbeck). Eighteen species of ducks were observed during this two-month period, with a May 14 Redhead being particularly noteworthy in this line.

**HAWKS — OWLS:** The Bald Eagle was reported by several Century Run parties, and an immature was seen flying over Schenectady on May 23 (Nelle Van Vorst). A Virginia Rail was seen near Vischer's Ferry on May 14, and a Sora was also reported that day. These were the only Rail reports received. The Woodcock was reported from Niskayuna on April 16 and on several April and May dates thereafter. Lesser Yellow-legs and Least Sandpiper were other shorebird species recorded on May 14. A pair of Wilson's Snipe was observed at Vischer's Ponds on April 9 (Rudd Stone, Frazer Turrentine). A Great Black-backed Gull was seen near Vischer's Ferry on April 2 (SBC), and on April 9 two individuals were reported in that vicinity (RS, FT). Two Bonaparte's Gulls were observed at Saratoga Lake on April 17 (SBC). No terns were reported. Cuckoo reports were not numerous. The Yellow-bill was first seen in Schenectady on May 10 (H. O'Meara), and the Black-bill was first seen the following day in Scotia (EH). Two species of owls were reported. A Great Horned was heard at Alplaus on the evening of April 16 (Adelaide Heitcamp), and on May 2 a Great Horned was reported at the southern edge of Albany (Allen Benton). Two parties reported the Great Horned on May 14. On April 24 a Barn Owl was observed on some campus grounds in Troy (E. Austin), and another bird was present throughout most of May at Washington Park in Albany (AB, LS).

**SWIFTS — SHRIKES:** The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was quite common at Jenny Lake, near Sacandaga Reservoir, on April 16 (Guy Bartlett), and there were additional April reports of scattered individuals. The first local Eastern Kingbird report was from West Berne on May 5 (AB), and the Crested Flycatcher was first seen at Burnt Hills on May 1 (Marjorie Foote). An Olive-sided Flycatcher was recorded by one party on May 14. The Eastern Phoebe was not recorded until April 2, one bird near Vischer's Ferry (JM). Several Alder Flycatchers were seen and heard at Meadowdale Marsh on May 22 (SBC). Bank Swallows and Rough-winged Swallows were both first seen near Altamont on April 24 (SBC), and the Tree Swallow was first noted at Niskayuna on April 2 (SBC). The Purple Martin put in its first local appearance at Amsterdam on April 12 (Margaret Fitzgerald). An American Magpie at Slingerlands, near Albany, was the record of the period. The bird was heard and seen by Dr. R. J. Erickson in a brushy area near his home on April 22. Since he has spent most of his life in the West, Dr. Erickson is completely familiar with the species, and the bird is, of course, unmistakable. During the summer of 1954 some Magpies were released in Vermont (**Audubon Field Notes**,

Vol. 9, No. 1, page 13), and I would be inclined to consider this bird one of these rather than a natural straggler from the West. Scattered 1953 New Jersey, Connecticut, and Long Island records were attributed to the release of five birds in the summer of 1952 at Cranford, New Jersey. There are 1950 and 1951 records from Orient, Long Island (AFN, Vol. 6, No. 3, page 188). Red-breasted Nuthatches were rather widely reported early in May. The House Wren was first recorded at Gallupville on April 30 (Grace Zimmer), and a Carolina Wren was present at Collins Lake, Scotia, throughout the period. A Mockingbird was observed in Schenectady on May 18 by Dr. C. W. Woodall and several others. A Gray-cheeked Thrush was seen at Burnt Hills on May 10 (Marjorie Foote), and 1-2 were present at Loudonville between May 17 and May 22 (Mabel French). It was a dismal spring for the Olive-backed Thrush, and in fact the only report I have is of one bird at Mount McGregor, just north of Saratoga Springs, on May 15 (Marjorie Foote). Ruby-crowned Kinglets were quite widely reported the latter part of April, and Cedar Waxwings were widely reported from mid-April on. A Loggerhead Shrike was observed near Vischer's Ferry on April 2 (JM).

**VIREOS — WARBLERS:** The Red-eyed Vireo was first seen in Schenectady on May 1 (SBC), and the Warbling was first observed at Scotia on May 6 (EH). A Blue-headed Vireo was also recorded at Scotia on May 6 (EH). Only two species of warblers were reported in April. Myrtles moved in during the latter part of the month, and on April 30 a Black-throated Green was seen in Schenectady's Central Park (Alice Holmes). As expected, there was a flood of first dates the first week in May. The Black and White was observed on May 1 (JM), and the Northern Water-thrush was recorded that day at Burnt Hills (Marjorie Foote). The first Blackburnian was also seen on May 1 — at Albany (AB). The Nashville Warbler was seen on May 3 at Albany (AB). Firsts on May 7 included the Golden-winged Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, and Chestnut-sided Warbler (Marjorie Foote). The Parula, Black-throated Blue, Canada, and Louisiana Water-thrush put in an appearance on May 8 (SBC). A Worm-eating Warbler was recorded on May 14, and three Yellow-breasted Chats were observed on May 22 (SBC).

**BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS:** The Baltimore Oriole was first seen at Scotia on May 6 (EH), and the birds were subsequently present in good numbers. The Scarlet Tanager was observed at Wolf's Hollow, near Amsterdam, on May 8 (SBC), and the Rose-breasted Grosbeak was first noted at Scotia on May 6 (EH). There have been the usual several Cardinal reports, virtually all from feeders. In May a pair frequented a feeder at a locality a few miles south of Albany (Mrs. Richard Law); this is the only period record of a female bird of which I know. Evening Grosbeaks were widely reported, although they were nowhere present in large numbers. In April groups of up to ten or so frequented several Schenectady feeders. Seven individuals were seen at Saratoga Springs on April 17 (SBC), and several birds were present throughout April at Gallupville (Grace Zimmer) and late in the month at Loudonville (Mabel French). On May 8 a lone individual was seen near the Van Curler Hotel in downtown Schenectady (SBC). The Evening Grosbeak was easily recorded on the May 14 Century Run. The species was last observed locally on May 22, a pair at Amsterdam (Margaret Fitzgerald). Incidentally, between the dates of October 26 and May 17 Mrs. Fitzgerald banded no less than 677 of these birds, out of a supposedly permanent flock numbering considerably less than this number. There were a fair number of Purple Finch reports during both months. On April 7 and again on April 17 a male Pine Grosbeak was observed by Mrs. Gordon Stancliffe in Niskayuna. On April 16 a female Pine Grosbeak stunned itself by hitting a window of Mrs. Stancliffe's home. Another unusual record is that of 12 Red Crossbills, the majority of them males, seen in Schenectady by Gloria Meader on April 21. Eight to ten Redpolls were observed in Loudonville on April 4 (Mabel French). Pine Siskins were present throughout April at Albany (AB), and on the late date of May 22 a flock of 20, in full chorus, was seen at Loudonville (MF). The White-crowned Sparrow migration was, as stated, a very conspicuous one. The species was first observed on May 8 at Amsterdam (Margaret Fitzgerald) and at Gallupville (GZ). From May 9 through May 13 a small group of these birds, in company with White-throats, was singing lustily at one of Schenectady's most popular spots, the GE main entrance. A good total of 30 was observed at Burnt Hills on May 10 (Marjorie Foote). The species was last observed on April 13 at Loudonville (Mabel French). The Chipping Sparrow was not recorded until April 11 (EH).

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## REGION 9 — DELAWARE - HUDSON

ROBERT F. DEED

April and May were normal as to temperature, deficient as to rainfall, and generally average as to birds. On May 22 the Monticello area of Sullivan County had a late afternoon storm in which hail stones attained golf ball size. Damage was undoubtedly inflicted on early nesting birds (Wilbur P. Carr). Arrival dates were unsensational, in contrast to last year's record-breaking performance. The first big warbler wave arrived about May 1 in Rockland County (Frances Irving listed 19 species on that date near her home) and about May 5 in Ulster County (Fred Hough). All the usual rarities were noted during the May flight.

The two months were also dotted with dramatic appearances: an Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker in Westchester County, a Black-headed Grosbeak in Rockland, and a phenomenal flight of Brant up the Hudson Valley.

**LOONS — DUCKS:** On April 20, Ruth Grierson counted 26 Common Loons on Amawalk Reservoir in northern Westchester, some in courtship display. Mrs. Martha Earl of Blooming Grove, Orange County, kindly called attention to a large Great Blue Heron rookery in her locality, which several birders later visited. Another Great Blue Heron colony of 18 pair was found in Monticello, Sullivan Co., in April (Niven). An American Egret on May 14 at Blooming Grove was unusual (Edward D. Treacy).

Fred Hough reports a poor Canada Goose flight in Ulster. John C. Orth, Palisades Interstate Park naturalist, took pains to watch the Brant flights over the Hudson at Bear Mountain, with these results: May 17, more than 200; May 20, several thousand; May 21, again several thousand. A flock of about 80 flew over Nyack on May 11. Quite a record for a species that had been noted only four times previously in Rockland County!

Buffleheads, two of them, remained at Queensboro Lake, near Bear Mountain, until Apr. 21 and Green-winged Teal at Iona Island to May 1 (both reports from Orth). White-winged Scoters came unusually far up the Hudson, eight off Grand View, Rockland, on Apr. 21 (David Hill) and 11 at Bear Mountain on May 23 (Orth). Henry Dunbar found 40 American Mergansers at Ashokan Reservoir, Ulster, on Apr. 9, rather late.

A Double-crested Cormorant on Apr. 30 at Bear Mountain was rather early, however (Orth).

**HAWKS — OWLS:** The hawk flight was well underway by Mar. 10, according to Hough in Ulster County. He recorded the first Broad-winged Hawk on Mar. 28 at Stone Ridge. Near Bear Mountain, the first Broad-wing was on Apr. 15 (Orth). Orth also had a Pigeon Hawk on Apr. 11 and on May 4 a Turkey Vulture nest with two eggs. The first Turkey Vulture at Stone Ridge was on Mar. 1 (Hough). From Feb. 24, Treacy kept watch on a Turkey Vulture roost at Orr's Mills, Orange County; in mid-May, 35 birds occupied the roost. A pair of Kestrels nested in a box at Stanley O. Grierson's home in Katonah, Westchester, from Apr. 2 through May.

On May 5 Ed Treacy led a Rockland Audubon Society field trip to Walden to see a Great Horned Owl nest containing young.

Frances Irving recorded a new Rockland County early date, May 1, for the Black-billed Cuckoo.

**SWIFTS — SHRIKES:** Red-headed Woodpeckers nested in Orange County in at least two areas, Walden and Washingtonville. The prize woodpecker of the season, however, was the male Arctic Three-toed, seen on Apr. 7 in the Mianus River Gorge at New Castle, Westchester. It was studied at close range by Mrs. Anthony Anable of Stamford, Conn., and the Misses Alice and Helen Bristow of New Canaan, Conn. Allan Cruickshank commented that the only other record of this species for northern Westchester was in 1925 — Oct. 12, Nov. 6, and Dec. 11 — by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Tucker of Mt. Kisco.

House Wrens seem scarce this year in the Nyack area. Black-capped Chickadees migrated northward in huge numbers in the last half of April. Red-breasted Nuthatch was last recorded in Rockland County on May 4 (Eugene R. Brown) and in Ulster County on May 8 (Daniel Smiley). Hough reports Brown Creepers scarce

this spring in Ulster County. He had some early swallow records, though: Apr. 2 for Tree Swallows, Apr. 30 for Rough-winged Swallow and Cliff Swallow, Apr. 23 for Barn Swallow.

Rockland County had its third occurrence of the Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, May 4 and 6 (David Hill). Cedar Waxwings were reported normally abundant in Rockland and Westchester, scarce in Ulster. A Migrant Shrike was found on Apr. 1 at Kripplebush, Ulster, by Fred Hough.

**VIREOS — WARBLERS:** The only remarkable feature of the Warbler migration was two Cerulean Warblers in Rockland, where they have been appearing casually in recent years. On May 14, Treacy found one south of Bear Mountain; on May 15, Thomas G. Dow found another near Tappan. In contrast to last year, Palm Warblers were scarce in Ulster (Hough).

**BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS:** Bobolinks occupied their usual haunts in Orange and Ulster counties. An Orchard Oriole, May 11 at Stone Ridge (Hough). Mrs. Maynard Hammond of Sparrowbush, Orange County, describes a Blue Grosbeak at her feeder on May 5, mentioning the big bill and two brown wingbars.

A Black-headed Grosbeak in nearly full male plumage remained in Palisades, Rockland County, from Apr. 23 through 30, to the delight of many local birders. It was identified by Mrs. Archer Stansbury, at whose home it fed. On the late date of May 17, a Pine Siskin was killed by hitting a window at Bedford, Westchester (Grierson). The Henslow's Sparrow arrived Apr. 29 at Kripplebush, Ulster (Hough). 50 Clinton Ave., Nyack, N. Y.

## REGION 10 — MARINE

The migration of Red-wings and Grackles, first reported in mid-February, increased around March 1, there being very little retarding weather. Throughout March and during early April, at sunset, scattered flocks aggregating hundreds of both could be seen in Southern Nassau county flying southward to spend the night on the coastal marshes in the tall phragmites.

The extreme sterility of the grassy strips along the ocean causeways resulted in sparse numbers and rapid passage of the usually abundant sparrows on the outer or barrier beaches, especially at Gilgo. In many places scarcely a grass blade or seed stalk was visible above the infiltrating white sand, due to conditions described in the May issue of *The Kingbird*. Greatly reduced numbers of Juncos, Fox and Song Sparrows were found, and an estimated 50 percent of Tree Sparrows. The Vesper Sparrow was practically unrecorded and the Ipswich Sparrow scarcer than in many years, with very few April reports.

Mid-April brought some early warblers and a few gnatcatchers. No very good flights of landbirds were reported on weekends during May. There was a good movement of rarities in Central Park, N.Y.C. The month was particularly dry, but some rain fell during the last week. Birds, generally, passed through quickly, thereby forcing an opinion from one consistent week-end birder who, after visiting the good tracts, remarked on June 5: "Migration virtually over, very unsatisfactory".

**LOONS — DUCKS:** Common Loons were numerous into late April and a few lingered into June. Sooty Shearwater appeared offshore about June 2 when 95 were counted between Moriches and Shinnecock Inlets about 150 yards offshore; also one was seen at Atlantic Beach, June 4. The Gannet flight appeared light, but there were five observed at Atlantic Beach, June 4 (Mayer, Rose). On April 23 the heron count at Jones Beach consisted of four American and two Snowy Egrets and three Yellow-crowned Night Herons; first Little Blue Heron was noted at Springfield, May 8. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron appeared for several days during May in Central Park, N.Y.C.

Although 31 Gadwall were seen at Jones Beach during April, only a few remained to breed; European Teal, regularly reported in winter on Long Island a decade ago, now are much rarer and generally casual fall, or late winter and spring birds. One was present at East Patchogue in mid-February and early March and one at Jones Beach, April 2. The Blue-winged Teal was rather scarce; first report: East Patchogue, April 3. Ring-necked Duck left on time, but was common on many

fresh water ponds on Long Island this spring and no doubt is becoming more common each year. Probably the lengthened hunting season with resultant injured birds is the cause of more Brant lingering for the past two years, with 121 seen at East Moriches, May 8, and 75 at Seaford in mid-May.

**HAWKS — OWLS:** One record of Turkey Vulture: Bridgehampton, April 27, (I. Alperin); Broad-winged Hawk back on nesting grounds at Smithtown, May 8; several reports of Red-tailed Hawk from eastern Long Island; first Osprey, April 3, at Mastic (Nichols). Duck and Pigeon Hawk practically unrecorded this spring.

Several King Rails were seen; one or two Sora; Black Rail was noted at Lawrence, June 4 (J. Mayer, G. Rose). First Piping Plover: March 27 at Baldwin (E. Morgan). On Jamaica Bay, April 30, besides dozens of Black-bellied Plover and Dowitchers there were seven Red-backed, three Least and seven Semipalmated Sandpipers and an early White-rumped Sandpiper. Wilson's Snipe lingered into May at Tackapausha Preserve near Seaford (Morgan). A good flight of Turnstones came through in early June; very few reports of Curlew and Willet; several Jaegers were recorded from the Atlantic Beach area.

Common and Least Terns arrived in early May. Black Tern was reported at Jones Beach, May 24 (W. Reid, Sr. and Jr.). An estimated 50 Roseate Terns were seen at Oak Beach in late May and Black Skimmers are present in good numbers on the outer beaches. Cuckoos appeared down in numbers, but both species were present in Massapequa, June 5. Several Barn Owl records come from western Long Island; Short-eared Owl rather scarce, practically no other Owls reported, except for a few Screech Owls on the North Shore and in the Manorville section.

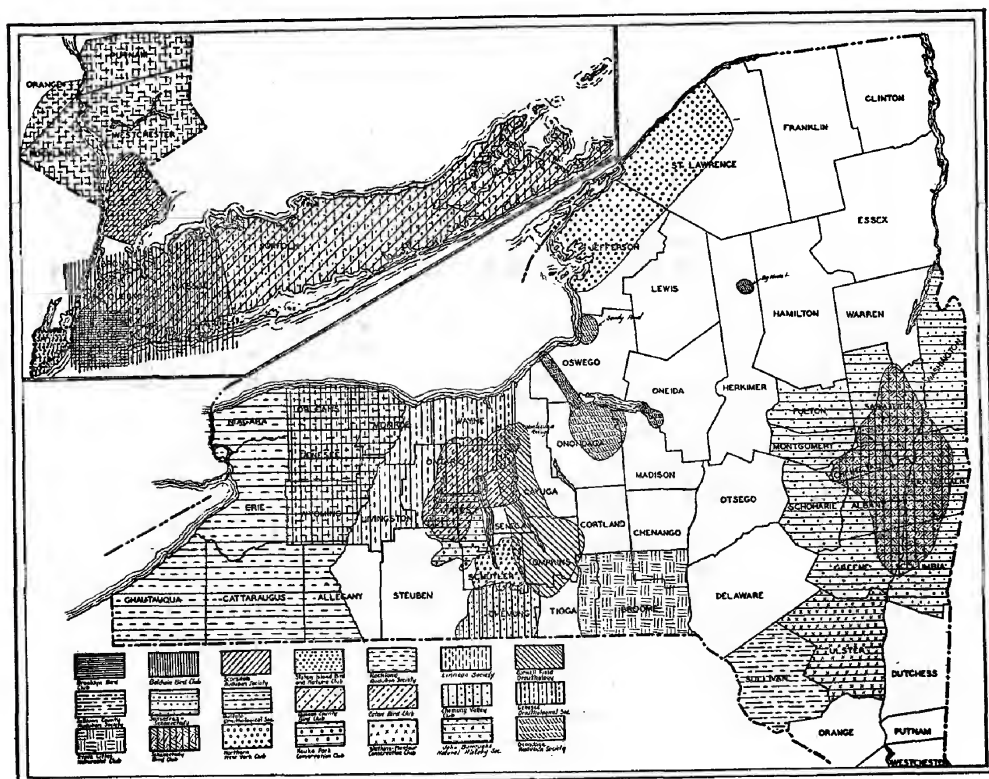
**SWIFTS — SHRIKES:** The Whip-poor-will came in late April; practically no Nighthawks were recorded. Prairie Horned Lark was pairing at Orient, February 21 (R. Latham). A small flight of Flickers, Phoebe, Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and a singing Brown Creeper at Jones Beach, April 2. First Sapsucker: Commack, March 20; Phoebe, Manorville, March 13 (G. Raynor); first Rough-winged Swallow, western Long Island, April 3; Kingbird arrived first week in May. Olive-sided and small Flycatchers slipped through almost unnoticed. A Magpie was seen at Woodmere, May 6 (J. Bull, A. Penberthy) and two on May 7 at Howard Beach, flying over (G. Carleton). A late Red-breasted Nuthatch was present at Jones Beach, May 15 (Elliott); Bluebird showed up at Baldwin, March 1 (Morgan). Thrushes came through regularly, with fair numbers of Veerys in the North Shore woodlands; a Short-billed Marsh Wren was recorded at Springfield, June 4. Practically no Mockingbird records; first Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, April 10 at Lawrence. There was a small flight of Gnatcatchers during the first week in May.

**VIREOS — WARBLERS:** Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos are well distributed on the North Shore eastward to Oyster Bay from the Manhasset region (Lyman Langdon Audubon Society). A Philadelphia Vireo appeared at Prospect Park, May 22 (M. Gordon). Among warblers an early Blue-winged was recorded at Babylon Apr. 15; there was a small flight of Yellow-palm Warblers, April 9, 10. Two Prothonotary Warblers were seen at Mill Neck, May 15 (L. L. Audubon Society). The Cape May came through about May 7; Chat, first at Idlewild, May 8; Tennessee Warbler was seen at Great River, May 22 (Baldwin Bird Club) and several were noted around that time in Central Park, N. Y. C. (Mrs. P. Messing). Fair numbers of Bay-breasted and Cape May Warblers, a Brewster's, Cerulean and Kentucky and a few Blackburnian Warblers were also recorded from Central Park. Fairly good reports came from the upper New York City parks, but Prospect Park records were below normal.

**BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS:** Bobolinks were scarce; Orchard Oriole exceptionally so. There was an abundance of Scarlet Tanagers; Summer Tanager was recorded from three Long Island areas in late May and there were also several reports from Central Park, one appearing in late April. Unusual was an Evening Grosbeak at Woodmere, May 8 (Mayer, Rose). The House Finch is increasing rapidly on Long Island; there was a flock of 44 Purple Finches at Mill Neck, March 17 (A. Penberthy). There were two reports of Pine Siskin on western Long Island in early May. One Henslow's Sparrow record: Springfield, June 5; White-crowned Sparrows were seen on a number of occasions in Central Park and a few Lincoln's. White-crowns were rather scarce on Long Island; there were at least two reports of the Lincoln's Sparrow on the western end. Very few migrating Vesper Sparrows were seen, partly because of its present rarity as a breeding species on western Long Island since the farms and Hempstead Plains have been built upon and developed.

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## AREAS COVERED BY MEMBER CLUBS



### KINGBIRD TIMETABLE

Regional Report Coverage	Deadline to Kingbird	Approx. Publ. Date	Issue Number
Dec., Jan.	April 15	May 15	No. 1—May Issue
Feb., March			
April, May	June 15	July 15	No. 2—July Issue
June, July	Sept. 15	Oct. 15	No. 3—Oct. Issue
Aug., Sept.	Dec. 15	Jan. 15	No. 4—Jan. Issue
Oct., Nov.			

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